

**Mayor Jerry Sanders**  
**Police Officers Union Contract Remarks**  
**Monday, May 1, 2006**

- Council President Peters, Honorable Councilmembers. We are at impasse with the Police Officers Union. We have not been able to reach agreement with the union. And I do not feel that any further discussions will be productive on a contract for next year.
- In a moment, Lisa Briggs and others will present the City's proposal.
- The Police Officers Union has requested \$9.1 million in pay and benefits increases this coming year. I am not able to support any increases for any employee group this coming year.
- We simply can't afford it.
- I also think it sends the wrong message to our citizens that we are willing to repeat the errors of the past. Lastly, I think that a salary and benefit comparison should be completed before we consider any increases.
- Let me tell you a little more about my reasoning on these issues.
- First, let me state the obvious. I was a cop in this city for 26 years and chief for 6 years. I have nothing but respect and admiration for the men and women that put their lives on the line every day. I know what they go through and I could not be prouder of each and every one of them for their service to this community.
- I also know how hard it is for you to vote against pay raises for employees that carry guns and badges. It would be great if the circumstances were right to give the police officers union – and all of our employee groups – a raise.
- It's highly counter-intuitive to most people that I am not supporting a raise for cops. It would be very easy for me to support it. I know the rhetoric well. In fact, as a proud union member myself for 26 years, I was part of it all.
- But I wasn't elected to do what it is expected; I was elected to do what's right.
- The POA would like you to believe that if you increase pay and benefits by \$9.1 million this coming year, the Department's recruitment and retention issues will go away.
- That is simply not the case. It is an oversimplification of a much larger national issue.
- Recruitment and retention is a problem nation-wide for three principle reasons:

- Baby-boomers are retiring;
  - Younger generations are not as interested in law enforcement; and
  - The on-going personnel needs of the military.
- This is a cyclical issue that we have seen in the past in police circles. We are not alone by any stretch of the imagination.
  - Here in San Diego, the problem has been compounded by a few additional issues:
  - First, concern on the part of some police officers that they will lose their pension benefits. This hurts retention and recruitment.
  - All of the various lawsuits have certainly not helped the anxiety level among officers. Some officers believe that if they leave the Department and take their pension benefits with them, it will be harder for them to be taken away altogether.
  - Second, the talk of bankruptcy and specifically, the City's financial situation over the past 3 years.
  - Third, the tone and tenor at City Hall and specifically, the poor relations between the City's elected leaders over the past year.
  - Fourth, high housing prices.
  - Fifth, the fact that we allowed officers to live outside of San Diego County – and now they want to work there as well. For example, of the 48 officers that have left this year, 20 left for agencies in Riverside County – all of them live there; and
  - Finally, better pay and working conditions at some other law enforcement agencies.
  - So, you see, this is a very complex issue. Simply paying police officers more next year will not achieve the end that the POA is trying to sell. Given all of the other issues involved at the moment, pay issues is but one of the myriad of issues involving recruitment and retention.
  - Nonetheless, I am highly sympathetic to these issues – I don't want you for one second to think that I am not. I am highly concerned. I don't want our officers to leave the department. And I want to attract more officers.
  - I think that the San Diego Police Departments is one of the very best departments in the region to work for. I think many of the police officers that have left will eventually return to the SDPD in a few years once some of our problems pass.

- What they will find is that the smaller departments do not offer the advancement and specialty potential that our department does.
- Let's talk about pay for a second. In my opinion, our pay compares favorably with that offered by other law enforcement agencies in the region:
- A patrol officer tops out at \$67,204 in the City of San Diego.
- At the Riverside Sherriff's Office, they top out at \$64,020.
- In Chula Vista, at \$70,488 and at the San Diego Sherriff's Office at \$68,361.
- A sergeant in the City of San Diego tops out at \$81,619.
- At the Riverside Sherriff's office, they top out at \$62,595.
- In Chula Vista, at \$89,294 and
- at the San Diego Sherriff's Office at \$77,167.
- So, all in all, I think we are competitive. But to answer this issue once and for all, we will be conducting a comprehensive salary and benefit survey over the course of the next year. This will be the basis for discussions next year with all employee groups.
- We also have new recruits that will supplement our numbers. Currently, there are 36 recruits in the academy.
- While we cannot offer a pay or benefit increase this year, I did think it was important to fully fund the police department.
- I have added \$24.2 million in new funds for the Police Department. This new money will allow the department to do the following:
- Fully fund overtime for police officers. In the past, the Department intentionally held positions open because it had to pay for overtime with the money that otherwise would have gone to hiring law enforcement officers. This will allow the Department to hire up to the 2,100 sworn number;
- Fully funding 96 positions that were previously paid for, in part, by not hiring police officers;
- Funding "pay in lieu" and "special pays" for cops; and
- Funding IT and equipment enhancements.

- While I cannot support a pay increase, I thought it was important to do everything possible to fund the Department in the way in which it deserves to be funded.
- Lastly, let me speak to the optics of your decision.
- Given the City's financial situation, I think it sends a very bad message to our citizens to give cops a pay and pension benefits increase. If you should do this, I think citizens will have a right to question whether or not we have learned our lessons.
- Citizens need to see the City getting its house in order before we give any employee group a raise.
- Thank you.